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ABSTRACT

This study explored relationships between certain social values and the attitudinal and behavioral dimensions of physical activity. Data were supplied by 1,895 students enrolled in SUNY-Binghamton physical education classes through the use of a self-administered questionnaire. Social values were measured with the use of the Value Profile as devised by Bales and Couch, and attitudes toward physical activity were assessed with Kenyon's ATPA Scale. Participation in the various dimensions of physical activity and in interscholastic athletics was self-reported. The results of the study indicated the following: (a) correlations between attitudes toward and participation in physical activity were positive and significant for each of the six ATPA scales; (b) there was a low but positive and significant correlation between acceptance of authority and participation in interscholastic athletics; and (c) there was a low but negative and significant correlation between equalitarianism and participation in interscholastic athletics. It was concluded that organized school athletic programs tend to serve as a conservative and integrating force among athletes. Participation in athletics does not appear to have a positive influence on the development of feelings of equality toward others. (Author/JS)

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The Relationship of Social Values and Attitudes Toward and Participation in Physical Activity and Sports Among College Students[1]

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It is believed that sports are a mirror of the society of which they are a part. Claims have been made that participation in sports will enhance one's acceptance of and socialization to the traditional, idealized values of a particular society. In a sense, sports are thought to serve as a proving ground or a microcosmic model in which certain attitudes and values can be learned under the supervision of adult leaders. While it is true that an individual who participates in sports can and probably does receive certain beneficial and acceptable social and psychological outcomes from such participation, there is certainly no guarantee that such will be the case. Recognition needs to be made of the fact that values do not exist in the sports themselves. Rather, they are developed within the individual as he or she learns to behave in situations which reinforce such values.

Loy postulated that the competitive games in American society reflect the major value orientations of equality, achievement, rationality, and fair competition in our society. However, Webb observed that as children are socialized toward the achievement-

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orientation of American society, the values in sports which emphasize equity and fairness become somewhat eroded. Olgivie and Tutko were unable to find empirical support for the widely-held belief that sport builds character. On the other hand, Schafer concluded that school sports tend to exert a conservatizing and integrating influence on its participants. Thus, there is a lack of agreement among researchers who have delved into the relationships of values and participation in sport. The difficulty in such research is the diversity of variables which are involved and the inadequacy of the measurement of values and other psycho-social attributes. These two problems account for a large part of the inconsistencies which exist in the research results which deal with values and sport.

The purpose of the study being presented today was to explore the relationships which existed between certain social values and the attitudinal and behavioral dimensions of physical activity and sport. Social values were measured with the use of The Value Profile as devised by Bales and Couch. There are four social values which are assessed in this particular profile. These values are: Acceptance of Authority, Equalitarianism, Need-Expression, and Individualism. Only the first two, Acceptance of Authority and Equalitarianism were considered of importance to this study. But the Bales and Couch Value Profile was selected from among the many value scales available because of the particular relevance which the two dimensions of Acceptance of Authority and Equalitarianism had to prior research in the area of values and sport. The Equalitarianism scale was related to Loy's hypothesis that American sports reflect a predominant value

orientation in our society of espousing feelings of equality. The Acceptance of Authority scale was related to Schafer's conclusion that school sports had a conservatizing and integrating influence in our society.

Attitudes toward physical activity were assessed with Kenyon's ATPA Scale, consisting of six instrumental values for physical activity as follows: Social, Fitness, Vertigo, Aesthetic, Catharsis, and Ascetic. This scale was selected because of its widespread acceptability and use among physical educators, and thus, the possibility of making comparisons with earlier research using different populations. Information was also collected which dealt with the extent of participation in interscholastic athletics while in high school and the frequency of participation in activities corresponding to the six dimensions of physical activity described by Kenyon.

Data were supplied by one thousand, eight hundred ninety five students enrolled in physical education classes at SUNY-Binghamton during the Fall, 1971 semester. Eight hundred ninety males (or 46.9% of the total) and one thousand five females (or 53.1% of the total) participated in the study. While the students are a highly select group academically, they do represent the geographic distribution of college students in the State of New York. Each of them completed a self-administered questionnaire which included Likert-type responses of strength of agreement or disagreement to the value and attitude statements of The Value Profile and the ATPA Scale.

The questionnaire included a total of 138 items. The Value Profile and ATPA Scale items were interspersed with other questions providing biographical, sociological, and sports participation data

in order to reduce the chances of a response-set occurring. The mean completion time for the respondents was about 25 minutes. The responses were transferred from the questionnaire booklets to punch cards by trained key-punchers. In order to check on the reliability of this transfer process, a sample of 97 questionnaires was verified with the corresponding punch cards. Of the 13,289 key punches in this sample, a total of 49 errors was discovered, for an acceptable error rate of .36%.

In addition to the 138 variables included in the questionnaire, ten new variables were developed corresponding to the four value and the six attitude-toward-physical activity categories. This was accomplished by using the index construction program in Osiris II, a computer program designed specifically to handle social science survey data. The various value and attitude responses were combined into total scores for each of the ten value and attitude dimensions for each respondent. In order for each respondent to have a complete score on each index, i.e., all components of each dimension being included in the total score, it was necessary to assign scores to any respondents who neglected to answer certain items. The missing data in this case were handled by assigning the mean score for each questionnaire item to any respondent failing to answer that item.

Because the wide variation in index scores among the respondents would be difficult to handle in the tabular analysis to follow, ten additional variables were formed by collapsing the data into nine levels. Very little accuracy of representation was lost through this procedure, a correlation matrix of collapsed and raw score indices revealing a range of intercorrelations of .93 to .97.

With all original information and constructed and collapsed indices transferred to magnetic tape, the Osiris computer program was utilized which made it possible to derive frequencies, percentages, and marginals for a cross-tab analysis of the paired independent and dependent variables. A Pearsonian correlation program was used to test the strength and statistical significance of the relationships between selected pairs of variables. While the three commonly accepted assumptions for using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation coefficient, those of linear relationship between the two variables, normal distribution of the variables, and homoscedasticity were not strictly met, consultation with various statistical sources revealed no problem in the use of this statistical technique. Correlation coefficients which are .30 or lower (which are prevalent in the present study) tend to be changed very little even with drastic changes in the shape of one distribution.

The results and conclusions of the study were as follows:

1. The correlations between attitudes toward and participation in physical activity were positive and significant at the .01 level for each of the six ATPA Scales. In other words, for the subjects in this study there was a consistency between their attitude toward a particular type of physical activity and the frequency of their participation in that same kind of activity. The correlations ranged from .325 to .463 for the six dimensions of physical activity, which, while positive and statistically significant are too low to account for much of the variance which might occur in one variable or the other. However, they are sufficiently high to make the reasonable assumption that it is possible to accurately assess one's

attitude toward physical activity and sport. It does not seem to be a subject about which one is unwilling to reveal one's true feelings.

2. There was a correlation coefficient of .151 between Acceptance of Authority and the extent of one's participation in interscholastic athletics. The correlation was low, but it was positive and statistically significant at the .01 level.
3. There was a correlation coefficient of -.063 between Equalitarianism and participation in interscholastic athletics. This negative correlation was significant at the .05 level.

The results of this study led to the conclusion that organized school sport programs, either through selection of participants or influence on participants, tend to serve as a conservatizing and integrating force among the athletes. The students in this study who were most active in interscholastic athletics were also more accepting of authority than their non-athletic counterparts. Not only were the correlations between Acceptance of Authority and participation in interscholastic athletics positive and significant, but so, too, were the correlations between Acceptance of Authority and both attitude toward and participation in physical activity as an Ascetic experience. These results tend to confirm Schafer's earlier conclusions.

The negative correlation between Equalitarianism and participation in interscholastic athletics tends to disagree with Loy's hypothesis about sport reflecting American society's feeling of equality. The commonly held belief that participation in sports will assist in the development of feelings of equality for all persons was not substantiated by this study. In fact, persons who participated in interscholastic

athletics tended to score lower on the Equalitarianism value scale than did non-participants. The results of this study contradict the viewpoint that sports tend to foster positive attitudes toward equalitarianism. Non-supporting data of this kind demonstrate the need for more extensive attitudinal and behavioral research into sport participation in order to more accurately represent the outcomes to be expected from such involvement.

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